

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

FEMALE TERMINAL WITH SACRIFICIAL ARC DISCHARGE CONTACTS

A female terminal with a passageway in a mating end is defined by generally spaced apart sidewalls for receiving a male terminal with at least one flat surface. The mating end may be configured from two spaced apart U-shaped channels, with a primary contact defined in each sidewall of the U-shaped channels and a sacrificial contact defined in each sidewall forwardly in the passageway of the primary contact. As the male terminal is inserted into the female terminal, it first comes into contact with the sacrificial contact to discharge any arcs between the terminals before coming into contact with the primary contacts. The sacrificial contacts may be in the form of an elongated bar that is integrally formed with the sidewalls, and that is curved or inwardly arcuate into the passageway to engage the male terminal. The sacrificial contacts are disposed in the direction of insertion of the male terminal into the passageway, and are separated from the sidewall by apertures above and below the elongated bar. Any residue from arcing that would interfere with the electrical contacting performance of the primary contacts is thus mostly contained at the sacrificial contacts.